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Mayor Tim Kelly announces Chattanooga's new department and reporting structure

Presents reorganization plan to City Council for confirmation, department heads to be submitted to City Council for confirmation at a later date

Chattanooga, Tenn. (June 8, 2021) — Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly on Tuesday unveiled a new structure for city government, as part of a reorganization of City Hall that will be completed when his administration rolls out its budget in August.

Every new mayoral administration has both the opportunity and the directive from Chattanooga's City Charter to reorganize city government, which must be completed within 60 days of taking office.

While some departments will merge, separate or otherwise change under the plan presented to City Council, a number of departments won't be altered.

The Police, Fire, Finance and Administration, Purchasing, Information Technology and Human Resources departments will retain their current structure.

Other departments will see more substantial changes.

The current Department of Economic and Community Development, also known as ECD, will be split into two departments: the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Community Development.

The Department of Transportation, or CDOT, and the Department of Youth & Family Development, or YFD, will no longer continue as separate departments, with their functions and employees continuing to serve residents as part of other departments.

For instance, Chattanooga's community centers will now be managed by the Department of Community Development.

And parts of the Department of Transportation — such as the Transportation Division — will continue to function under the Department of Public Works, while planning functions will continue under the newly created Department of City Planning.

Other new departments include the Department of Early Learning, the Department of Equity & Community Engagement, the Department of Innovation Delivery & Performance, and the Department of Parks & Outdoors.

“We will be a community where City Hall isn’t just a building on East 11th street, but a network of services, places, and relationships embedded in neighborhoods across Chattanooga,” said Mayor Tim Kelly. “We will be a city with the most investment-ready early learning system in the country, with a path toward universal access. We will be a city where opportunity is not only possible, but plentiful, for every single one of our residents. In my administration, economic development will go beyond incentives and industrial parks—we will open up pathways for local small businesses to grow and thrive and hire. Finally, we will do all of this with an equity lens that ensures we’re building toward long-term solutions for everyone in our community.”

Here’s how the new departments will function at a more granular level:

- The newly independent Department of Economic Development will manage both economic and workforce development, as well as real property and brownfields.
- The Department of Community Development, in addition to managing Chattanooga’s community centers, will also include neighborhood services and assistance programs, and will still coordinate with the Department of Economic Development on workforce assistance.
- The Department of Equity & Community Engagement will contain the functions previously served by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the newly created Office of New Americans, and will also perform community engagement and outreach functions. This new department, which reports directly to the mayor, will also focus on supplier diversity, as well as diversity, equity and inclusion across the city.
- The new Department of City Planning will include the Regional Planning Agency and Smart Cities, as well as transportation planning, strategic capital planning, and sustainability.
- The new Department of Early Learning will manage Head Start and family child care navigators, as well as manage partnerships with Hamilton County Schools and early learning centers.
- The new Department of Innovation Delivery & Performance will oversee the 311 Center, as well as the Office of Performance Management and Open Data. The new department will also oversee special citywide performance improvement projects.
- The new Department of Parks & Outdoors will consolidate a number of functions from other departments to create a more streamlined and functional department focused on outdoor activities:
 - Parks Planning will be transferred from Open Spaces
 - Parks Programming will be consolidated from YFD and Open Spaces
 - Parks Maintenance will be transferred from Public Works
 - Greenways and Neighborhood Connectivity will be transferred from CDOT
 - Outdoor Chattanooga will be transferred from ECD
 - Special Events will be transferred from Open Spaces
 - Outdoor recreation will be transferred from YFD
 - Golf Courses will be transferred from Public Works
- The Department of Public Works will continue its engineering, wastewater, city services and fleet functions, while growing to include the Transportation Division from CDOT and the Land Development Office from ECD.

The new plan also includes a new reporting structure to help drive stronger decision making, as well as more responsive and efficient government.

The Chief of Staff, Chief Policy Officer, Chief of Police, City Attorney, Chief Equity Officer and Senior Advisor for Economic Opportunity will all report directly to the mayor.

The city will no longer have a chief operating officer, with most of those operational functions being consolidated under the Chief of Staff, while most planning and strategic functions will be managed by the Chief Policy Officer.

Subject to City Council confirmation, the city will implement a new departmental structure:

Chief of Staff:

- Community Development
- Public Works
- Parks & Outdoors
- Fire Department
- Innovation Delivery & Performance
- Finance & Administration
- Purchasing
- Information Technology
- Human Resources

Chief Policy Officer:

- City Planning
- Early Learning
- Family Justice Center
- Office of Community Health
- Office of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

The Chief Equity Officer will lead the Department of Equity & Community Engagement, while the Senior Advisor for Economic Opportunity will lead the Department of Economic Development and the city's workforce development efforts.

The Kelly administration plans to complete its transition in August with the presentation of a new budget, which will reallocate funding to allow the new departments to perform their intended functions.

In the interim, employees will continue to report to work as before and will report to the same supervisors until further notice. The mayor will appoint department heads at a later date, subject to confirmation by the City Council. Kelly has already requested confirmation of Fire Chief Phil Hyman, City Finance Officer Daisy Madison, and Interim Treasurer Tanikia Jackson.

As the city will continue to offer substantially all of the services it offered before, the administration will not consider and will not implement any layoffs, pay reductions, or workforce reduction strategies. While departments may be restructured, all current civil service employees will be retained and those in affected departments will be reorganized into the new structure.

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